

The Frederick Douglass Bridge project is part of the larger Anacostia Waterfront Initiative that will utilize services from local businesses such as VJS-TC. Photo Caption: (rendering of bridge) – Courtesy of District Department of Transportation

Relationships are to an entrepreneur, what water is to a human being; a necessity for survival. Therefore business owners who are better at developing, maintaining and growing powerful relationships tend to have more success in business. This is a concept Valerie J. Southern has mastered and built her company upon over the past 16 years. Valerie J. Southern - Transportation Consultant LLC (VJS-TC) began operations in 1998 in Issaquah, Washington, just east of Seattle; and then relocated to Fairfax, Virginia in 2009. Since the beginning, Southern has used the power of relationships to build a successful consulting practice.

Valerie J. Southern - Transportation Consultant, LLC is a multi-faceted consulting and engineering company that provides transportation planning and traffic engineering services

and serving as the Manager of Transportation Planning for the King County Department of Transportation in the state of Washington.

“I had been in progressively responsible, upwardly mobile



The Power of Relationships

Valerie J. Southern-Transportation Consultant, LLC

to federal, state, regional, county, local/tribal governments and to private sector planning and engineering firms.

Prior to launching VJS-TC, Southern built a successful transportation career in the government sector. Southern has a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University and a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Rhode Island. She also has 30 years of experience in managing public transportation systems and programs nationwide. Her previous roles include serving as the Deputy Secretary for Transportation Planning and Capital Programming at the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; serving as an Expert Consultant for the Federal Highway Administration; serving as the Deputy Director of Policy, Governor's Office, for the State of Rhode Island;

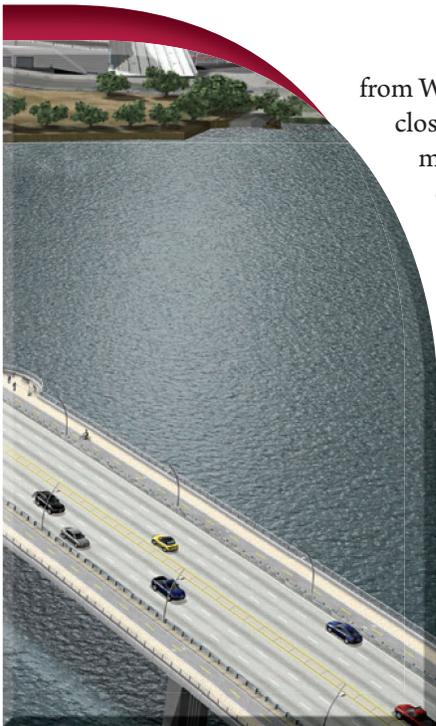


Owner Valerie J. Southern and Gary A. Norris, PE, senior traffic engineer, of VJS-TC.

positions during my 15-year career... I just looked at my portfolio and said 'you know I need to have a different experience and contribute in a different way, and learn as a professional in a different way.' I was thinking at the time that I have a lot to offer to the private sector and perhaps I should put my own shingle out and offer the resources that I have, as well as attract folks like Gary Norris to my practice and just experience the industry in a different way," Southern said.

Her strategy for success has involved building powerful internal and external relationships that have developed the expertise to provide excellent services to clients, and the opportunity to demonstrate superior value in the marketplace.

A key component of her internal relationships is demonstrated by her long-standing right-hand man Gary A. Norris, PE, a senior traffic engineer who relocated his services with Southern to the East Coast when she moved the company



from Washington State in order to be closer to family. “Gary has been with me since around 2000. When I decided to move the company to the East Coast, I knew most of my 22 employees would not be interested in moving, but Gary did have an interest in relocating to the East Coast and we are now reconstituting the company here in the Washington, DC area.”

This partnership between Southern and Norris has generated recent success in helping VJS-TC win a contract with CH2MHill on the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) in Washington, DC.

Southern said: “I had a chance to work with Linda Fennell, Program Manager of the District Department of Transportation Business Opportunity and Workforce Development Center and she personally introduced me to Craig Lenhart,

Program Manager of the AWI at CH2MHill. Gary also had a relationship with Ron Paananen, Deputy Program Manager of CH2MHill dating back to our work in Washington State. So through these two relationships, we were able to share our capabilities and expertise and won our first contract. Our first job was to put together the traffic signalization and ITS technical requirements for the design-build specifications for Segment 1 of the South Capitol Street Project. We then won a second opportunity to complete 30 percent lighting design plans on the Segment 3 of the South Capitol Street Project.”

CH2MHill’s Lenhart said, “Valerie J. Southern Transportation’s lighting experts were a perfect fit for our design team. They were able to take the project vision established by the client and deliver on the design goals for Phase II of the South Capitol Street Corridor Project.”

“It’s all about relationships,” said Southern. “The largest requirement for being a successful DBE is that you have to network. You have to establish strong relationships with the people who have these visions and are responsible for administering and implementing them.”

continued on page 35





DBE Program Experts-All Phases, All Modes
25 Years of continuous quality service

- DBE and ACDBE Programs and Goal Methodologies
- DBE-ACDBE Certification Support
- DBE Accomplishments Reporting
- Compliance Monitoring and Report Development
- Staff Development
- Training via the National DBE Training Institute
- Joint Venture Agreements

Ken Weeden & Associates, Inc. (KWA) is a national consulting firm that is 100% minority owned .

Ken Weeden & Associates, Inc. (KWA) has prepared FTA and FHWA DBE plans and goals for more than 150 transportation entities in 33 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. LET US HELP YOU!
www.kwaplanning.com
 (888) 762-6296
kenneth-weeden@kwaplanning.com

Wilmington NC • Raleigh NC • San Diego CA



Simply the Best Professional DBE/ACDBE/DBELO Training!



BETTER PROFESSIONALS—BETTER PROGRAMS

The National DBE Training Institute provides comprehensive training for:

- DBE and ACDBE Administration Professionals (49 CFR 26 and 23)
- DBE/ACDBE Program Liaison Officers and Administrative Support Staffs
- M-WBE or HUB Program Certification Professionals for UCP-Modeled Programs
- Procurement Specialists with DBE MWBE/HUB responsibilities
- ACDBE and DBE Business owners

Register online for our next classes— \$695 per person
 Visit www.natdbe-ti.com or call 888.762.6296

Visit our website for our 2014 Schedule and Training Site Locations

(888) 762-6296
kenneth-weeden@kwaplanning.com

Russell continued from page 29

nority entrepreneurs of all time. Shealey said:

“The thing that really stood out for me is that this (construction) business, while it is about sticks and bricks, it’s really about relationships. Herman understood that and knew how to leverage that well. If there is a model of how to do business, building the right relationships for the right reason—that also makes good business sense—is something that he was expert at doing, and part of what really leveraged his success.”

The legacy of Russell’s impact will last for generations, as he stands as one of the greatest minority entrepreneurs of all time; and evidence of the ability for minority businesses to succeed in the American business landscape. Shealey calls leaders like Russell “eagles” based on their ability to lift others during their flight. Shealey said: “I think of them as being the eagles, and soaring to move beyond pursuit, winning and executing, to excelling and being able to excel at a level of scale, scope and size that allows them to not only compete with the large firms but to be able to put their wings around smaller diverse companies to see them grow. They (H.J. Russell & Company) have a couple counterparts that came up in similar times; companies like Smoot Construction, that have been able to rise to the stature, and to the level, of what I like to call the eagles.”

NAMC is immensely proud of the life, career and success of their Hall of Fame member Herman J. Russell Sr., and in his honor NAMC National, the Hall of Fame and the NAMC Atlanta Chapter will donate \$5,000 to his charity, the H.J. Russell Foundation.

VJS-TC continued from page 11

Southern has continued her goal of growing the business on the East Coast by currently maintaining DBE certifications in seven states on the East Coast ranging from Rhode Island down to Virginia. This expansive coverage recently helped VJS-TC win its first contract with the Virginia Department of Transportation as a sub-consultant to another DBE firm on a three-year location and design contract awarded through VDOT’s Small Business Enterprise Program.

VJS-TC plans to continue its growth strategy, with the goal of tripling contract revenue over the next two years. However, Southern knows reaching that goal is not a singular effort. She believes perseverance and the power of creating mutually beneficial relationships will take her company there.

AMERICAN DBE

Calendar of Events ★ ★ ★

National 8(a) Association 2015 Winter Conference

February 3-4, Orlando, FL
www.national8aassociation.org/conference

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) 2015 DOT Civil Rights Virtual Symposium

February 3-5, 2015
www.civilrights.dot.gov/

National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC) Mid-Winter Board Meeting & Strategic Planning Session

February 4-6, 2015, New Orleans, LA
www.namcnational.org

National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Women in Construction Week 2015

March 1-7, 2015
www.nawic.org/nawic/WIC_Week_2015.asp

Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC) Leadership Summit and East Regional Forum

March TBD
www.amac-org.com

Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) Celebrating Women Who Move the Nation Awards

March 11, 2015, Washington, DC
www.comto.org

National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) 2015 Leadership Awards

May 20, 2015, New York, NY
www.nmsdc.org/2015-leadership-awards/

Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) 2015 National Conference & Business Fair

June 23-25, 2015, Austin, TX
www.conf.wbenc.org

American Contract Compliance Association (ACCA) 2015 ACCA National Training Institute

August 25-30, 2015, West Palm Beach, FL
www.accaweb.org